SISTERSONG, SPARK, and SisterLove Defeat SB 529

Jul 11, 2010 | General News | 0 comments

SPARK
What is REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE?
SPARK defines Reproductive Justice as a social justice movement rooted in the belief that individuals and communities should have the resources and power to make sustainable and liberatory decisions about their bodies, genders, sexualities, and lives.
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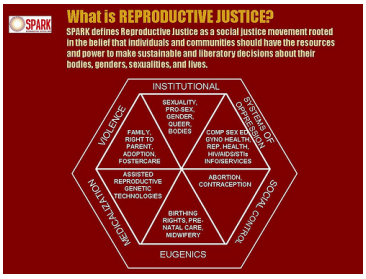
ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES
ABORTION, CONTRACEPTION
BIRTHING RIGHTS, PRE-NATAL CARE, MIDWIFERY
VIOLENCE
SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION
SOCIAL CONTROL
MEDICALIZATION
EUGENICS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As a follow-up to our last post about reproductive justice work in the U.S. South , check out this news release from Sistersong , a women of color reproductive justice collective, about their defeat of Georgia's SB 529, the "OB/GYN Criminalization and Racial Discrimination Act". Information on how to organize around this issue in other communities is included below:

SB 529, the "OB/GYN Criminalization and Racial Discrimination Act," died in the Rules Committee of the House on the last day of Georgia's legislative session. We won in Georgia, but this may be coming to your state next.

After more than three days of attempting to negotiate with the ultra conservative right to life lobby, the Speaker of the House David Ralston, was unable to convince them to support a more reasonable bill. The hard-line Republicans and moderate Republicans could not unite on the bill. This allowed the Democrats to filibuster. Essentially, it was the splintering that caused the bill's turnaround in lacking unity.

As the three women of color led reproductive justice organizations in Georgia, SisterSong, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, and SisterLove, Inc. are thrilled that this bill never made it out of the House Rules Committee. After more than three months of intense lobbying, SisterSong, SPARK, and SisterLove, in coordination with allies, Feminist Women's Health Center (GA) and Planned Parenthood Southeast, were able to bombard the Speaker's office with calls, emails, and faxes highlighting concerns with the bill posed for women of color and our doctors.

"We truly raised the voices of women of color, and black women in particular, as the session ended, with national support from Civil Rights leaders and clergy", stated Heidi Williamson, National Policy Coordinator for SisterSong. "Now we must do the work of empowering and educating our community on reproductive justice issues."

With virtually every "Endangered Species" billboard down throughout the state, which were utilized as a tool to build support for the legislation, and the legislation now dead, we will turn our attention to the African American women in Georgia and nationally to prepare for future battles against our bodies and freedoms.

What is Happening in Your Local Community?

We consider the recent billboard campaign in Georgia and the companion legislation in both the House and Senate efforts as a pilot program targeting women of color. These efforts at the local level serve as a catalyst to push harmful policies such as the criminalization of family planning, restriction of access to services and insurance and labeling abortion as a coercive practice at the state and local level. What we experienced in Georgia was an attempt to create a wedge between the Pro-Choice and Reproductive Justice Movements. A destructive wedge was also positioned to create dissention between communities of color.

Have you noticed local faith leaders countering family planning efforts?

Are conservative legislators or anti-choice groups hand picking women of color to lead anti-abortion, anti-choice, or anti-family planning efforts?

Has your community heard the claims that abortion is genocide?

Have you noticed anti-woman billboards in your neighborhood?

If you feel your community is falling prey to these tactics, email SisterSong at info@sistersong.net with the SUBJECT line: IN DEFENSE OF WOMEN. We want to

empower women's voices and support the local community to advocate for human rights and reproductive justice.

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